

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

We are writing to express our strong support for the C-17 Globemaster III airlift program and to state our disagreement with the opinion of Defense Secretary Robert Gates that the Department "complete production of the C-17 airlifter program this fiscal year."

As you noted on your own website, the C-17 is the Air Force's premier strategic transport aircraft and remains the military's most reliable and capable airlift aircraft. It currently flies more than 80 percent of all U.S. airlift missions, while comprising only 60 percent of the airlift fleet. The C-17 has proven capable of delivering more cargo, troops, and non-war humanitarian supplies than any other aircraft. In 2005 alone, the C-17 was instrumental in humanitarian missions in response to the Pakistan earthquake, the tsunami in Thailand, and Gulf Coast relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina. Given its strategic capabilities, the C-17 is being used at 172 percent of its planned usage rate.

Discontinuing production of our nation's premier tactical transport aircraft would be an enormous mistake and further strain our military's future airlift capability. Attempts to restart a closed production line of this magnitude at a time when we know more C-17s are necessary would be a grave fiscal mistake and contradicts strong bipartisan Congressional intent.

In addition to compelling national security and humanitarian needs, C-17 production has a national economic impact estimated at \$8.4 billion through its support of 30,000 jobs across 42 states nationwide. With all our efforts to put America back to work through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, massive manufacturing layoffs that weaken our national security and economy are ill advised.

Your Administration has and continues to publicly support the C-17 as an aircraft "which provides the backbone of our ability to extend global power." In addition, your Administration has publicly stated its intention to "preserve our unparalleled airpower capabilities to deter and defeat any conventional competitors, swiftly respond to crises across the globe, and support our ground forces." This statement could not more accurately reflect the benefit of additional C-17's.

We respectfully urge your support and consideration for the C-17 and we want to work with you to ensure that funding for this critical aircraft will go forward. We have no doubt that it is in America's national and economic security to do so.

Respectfully Submitted,


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress


W. Todd Akin
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Ken Calvert
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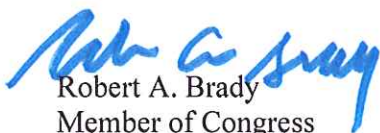
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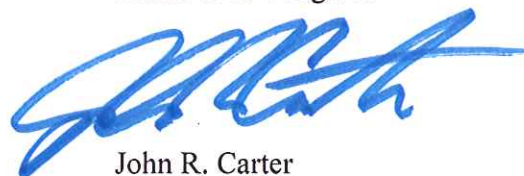
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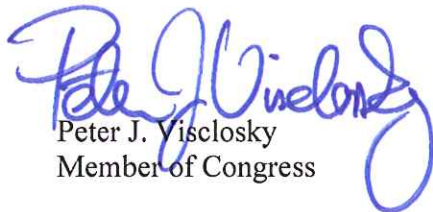
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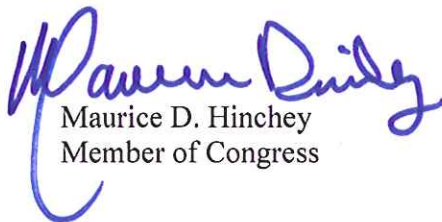
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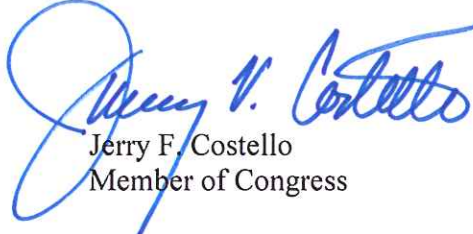



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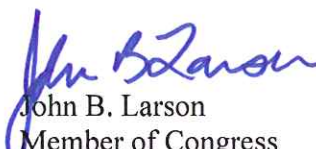

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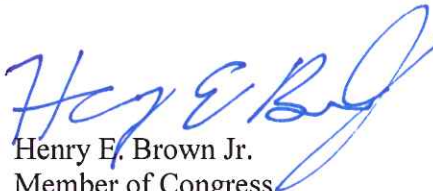

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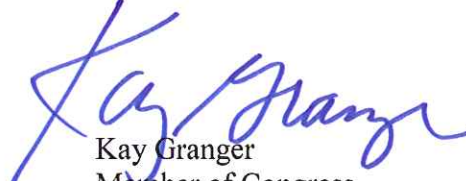

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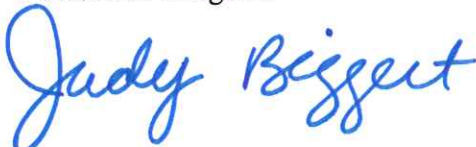
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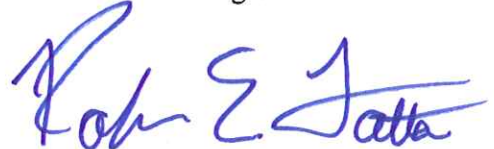
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